

Second International Conference on Acoustic Communication by Animals

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<http://oregonstate.edu/conferences/animalcommunication2008>

LONG-TERM GOALS

The overall goal was to bring together senior scholars, mid-career researchers and teachers, young investigators, and students to share ideas, data, and methods in the field of animal acoustic communication. The aim of this grant was to present the International Conference on Acoustic Communication by Animals in summer 2008.

OBJECTIVES

The emphasis of this conference was the integration of information across animal taxa and the enabling of exchanges between young investigators and more established investigators in the field. Another principal aim of this conference was to consider acoustic communication, its mechanisms, and the detection of acoustic signals, particularly in noisy backgrounds. At the same time, the intent was to examine communication within the context of how it develops, how it evolved, and its neuroethological basis. The multi-level approach that was taken by this conference will advance the field of animal bioacoustics.

APPROACH

The approach taken was as follows: (1) Elicit support from other researchers in various areas of bioacoustics, particularly by determining the scientific scope of the conference and by inviting prominent researchers to speak at the conference. (2) Find and reserve a venue for the conference. (3) Organize the structure of the conference by setting up sessions and topic-focused discussions, contacting potential keynote and other invited speakers, and setting the format of talks and posters. (4) Advertise the conference via online mailing lists, notifications at other conferences, advertisements in newsletters and journals, and word-of-mouth. (5) Make travel grants available for students to attend. (6) Organize the conference logistics, including meal services and lodging for attendees, payment system, conference schedule, audio/visual services, web site, student grants, signage, information on travel options, outside-the-conference educational and recreational options, and many other details. (7) Receive online abstracts for oral and poster presentations. (8) Produce the abstract book for handing out at the conference. (9) Hold the conference.

WORK COMPLETED

The above tasks were performed. (1) Principal support for getting the conference going came from Charles Schmid, Executive Director of the Acoustical Society of America, Whitlow Au, Richard Fay, and Andrea Megela Simmons. (2) The venue was the LaSells Stewart Center at Oregon State University. (3) The conference was organized to have two keynote speakers, 19 sessions with over 80 talks, approximately 90 posters, lunch and breaks served on-site to allow more time for conference matters, and a “Pizza and Taxa” dinner one evening and an program on Music and Nature on another evening. The invited speakers were Peter Marler (keynote), Peter Slater (keynote), Whitlow Au, Andrew Bass, Eliot Brenowitz, Robert Dooling, Gunter Ehret, Richard Fay, Albert Feng, Tecumseh Fitch, Kurt Fristrup, Peter Narins, Kazuo Okanoya, Arthur Popper, Caitlin O'Connell-Rodwell, Ron Schusterman, Andrea Megela Simmons, James Simmons, Joseph Sisneros, AnnMarie Surlykke, Terry Takahashi, Peter Tyak, and Sophie Van Parijs. (4) The conference was advertised in several mailing lists covering topics in animal acoustics, marine mammals, and animal behavior. It was also advertised at about 8 other conferences. (5) A total of 22 travelers received (or are in the process of receiving) travel grants. (6) The many logistical arrangements were completed. Most of this work was performed by Sara Heimlich (supported by this grant) and the Conferences Services office of Oregon State University. (7) A total of 181 abstracts were received via the web site listed at the top of this report. (8) The book was produced [Heimlich and Mellinger 2008] and enough copies were printed for all of the attendees to the conference. (9) The conference was held August 12-15, 2008 at LaSells Stewart Center, Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

RESULTS

Approximately 250 people attended the conference. Many people remarked, to myself and others, that they learned a lot at this conference, with the cross-taxa organization being especially useful because it provided contact with new research approaches and methods. Attendees also seemed happy with the conference logistics, remarking that they liked the conference ambience and the many opportunities to meet and talk with other researchers that they might not otherwise interact with.

IMPACT/APPLICATIONS

It is hoped that the dissemination of knowledge that happened at this conference will stimulate new directions of research in the future.

RELATED PROJECTS

A related conference is the 4th International Workshop on Detection and Localization of Marine Mammals using Passive Acoustics, to be held in September 2009 in Pavia, Italy. Many of the marine mammal participants at the Animal Communication conference are expected to attend this Detection and Localization conference next year. Web site: <http://www-unipv.it/cibra/DCLWorkshop2009.html>.

In addition, we are pursuing the creation of a book, potentially to be published by Springer-Verlag, based on the presentations made by many of the invited speakers at the conference. At this point 10 speakers have agreed to contribute chapters and we have contacted an editor at Springer.

PUBLICATIONS

Heimlich, S. H., and D. K. Mellinger. 2008. Abstract Book, Second International Conference on Acoustic Communication by Animals. OSU Conference Services, Corvallis. 324 pp.